



Stretford High School

Learning today, leading tomorrow

Family
Respect
Drive
Independence
Creativity
Success

Dear Friends

11th October 2019

As we approach the end of the first half term of the 2019/20 academic year, I am delighted to share some wonderful news with you!

Firstly, I would like to share our school pride for the Stretfordians of 2018/19 who received their GCSE results in August 2019. The upward trend continues for the 4th year in a row and this year's results have smashed records in SHS history. The DfE have recently confirmed that our Progress and Attainment scores are significantly above the national average and show that our young people are getting the quality education they deserve. Well done 2019 and bring on 2020!

Secondly, we have just received yet another award; this time it is the School of the Year Award 2019 in recognition of our commitment to improving careers education outcomes for young people across Greater Manchester. We know that helping our young people to think about their future goals and aspirations is a tremendous motivator and is a sure-fire way to set them on the path to success. We are delighted that our work in this area has been recognised. We are even more delighted to hear that our young people continue in their education when they leave us and that they are living their lives to their full potential: as true Stretfordians!

Thirdly, I would like to introduce you to a new member of staff who will be joining us after half term. His name is Oreo Murton and he is an expert in his field who has been specially trained to work with children, particularly in helping them with breaking down barriers and fears when reading, helping them to regulate their emotions, increase empathy, compassion and self-esteem and reduce anxiety levels. We are very excited to see how he interacts with our pupils - and staff! Having someone who you can talk to and who will listen with the absolute certainty that there will be no judgement can be a wonderful key to unlocking fears or worries which haunt us - the fears and thoughts that can become so much more manageable when they become words.

Our new member of staff is full time and permanent and I am sure that we will all get used to him being around, given time. The thought of him may be scary to some people - staff and pupils. Rest assured that Oreo will only ever work with someone who is comfortable working with him. He will never push himself on anyone or invade their space.

Oreo will office share with Miss Murton and myself when he first starts and will branch out into set areas of the school when it is appropriate. He will actually be living with Miss Murton and I know that she will take excellent care of him.

Another vital piece of information is that Oreo is a dog! A therapy dog to be exact! Research shows that therapy dogs in schools can have tremendous impact on well-being and mental health; reading with a dog has been recognised as a surefire way to improve reading engagement and ability. Your children will receive information about Oreo in their form classes next week. The information will introduce Oreo to them and explain briefly what his role is. You will find our School Dog Policy and our Risk Assessment on our school website and on your MyEd app for your perusal. As I mentioned above, dogs can be scary for some people. Rest reassured that Oreo has been specially trained to work in a school. He will not jump up on people, he will not bark at people - he is very obedient. He is a cockapoo and, as such, is much more hypoallergenic than most dogs, which will be a big help to anyone who has allergies. He will work in set places and no adult or child will have to interact with him if they don't wish to. He will never visit places used for prayer and worship.

Please take some time to read the policy and risk assessment for our newest member of our community. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact either Miss Murton or myself.

Last but not least, thank you for your ongoing support. So far this term, Year 7, Year 10 & Year 11 Parents have had opportunities to visit school to discuss how we can continue to work together to support our children. Attendance at all events has been exceptionally high and I thank you all. It is not an accident that our children's results are getting better and better every year. When parents, pupils and school work together, there are no limits!

Yours sincerely

Nicola Doward
Head Teacher